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SECRETARY OF THE STATE  
CONNECTICUT

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- NEWS RELEASE -

## **BYSIEWICZ LAUNCHES UNPRECEDENTED EFFORT TO REGISTER 10,000 NEW LATINO VOTERS**

‘¡TU VOTO *SI* CUENTA!’ CAMPAIGN TO PROVIDE VOTER EDUCATION,  
OUTREACH TO FASTEST GROWING ETHNIC COMMUNITY IN CONNECTICUT

**HARTFORD:** Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz officially launched the 2008 “¡Tu Voto *Si* Cuenta!” campaign to register 10,000 new Latino voters in Connecticut by the October 28<sup>th</sup> deadline. With the message in Spanish that “Your Vote **DOES** Count,” Secretary Bysiewicz is partnering with The Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission, which has helped to establish volunteer committees in Bridgeport, Danbury, Hartford, Meriden, New Britain, New Haven, New London, Wallingford, Waterbury, and Willimantic.

“As Connecticut’s top elections official, I have always viewed one of my chief missions as encouraging more participation in the political process,” said Secretary Bysiewicz, “today I am saying to the more than 225,000 eligible Latino voters in Connecticut: your vote does count! Latinos are the largest and fastest growing ethnic group in our state and I believe we have an obligation to open the doors of democracy to everyone who is eligible to vote. That means reaching out to those who may feel left out and saying, we want to hear your voices too.”

Bysiewicz's office estimates that about half of the eligible Latino voters in Connecticut are registered to vote. Nationally, it is estimated that nearly 7 million Latinos are registered to vote. Latinos are an important voting bloc in the Presidential election, in key swing states like Ohio, Florida, New Mexico and Nevada. In fact, President Bush's performance in winning over 40% of the Latino vote is regarded as a key factor in his 2004 election victory. Both presidential campaigns of John McCain and Barack Obama have made an aggressive effort to court the Latino vote in 2008.

The non-partisan "¡Tu Voto *Si* Cuenta!" campaign will mount an aggressive media campaign (radio, print, and television) targeting the Spanish speaking market to encourage voter participation but also provide significant voter education on how to use paper ballots with the new optical scan voting technology, as well as information on voter rights and proper forms of identification for registering and voting.

"This unique partnership has afforded us a unique opportunity to not just organize the Latino community and educate them on their voting rights," said Fernando Betancourt, executive director of the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission, "but to create a long-term movement towards the civic engagement of Latinos that will yield tangible results in terms of our political representation in civil society."

To that end, Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz's office has set up an official website to coordinate the "¡Tu Voto *Si* Cuenta!" campaign. The official website is [www.tuvotosicuenta.com](http://www.tuvotosicuenta.com)

In addition to voter registration and educational information, voters can also find out about community events and contact information for how to get involved with registration efforts at the local level at [www.tuvotosicuenta.com](http://www.tuvotosicuenta.com)

Joining Secretary Bysiewicz and the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs commission in the effort to educate and register Latino voters are several national Latino organizations that are providing staff and technical assistance:

**The United States Hispanic Leadership Institute**

<http://www.ushli.org/>

**The Hispanic Federation**

<http://www.hispanicfederation.org/>

**The NALEO Education Fund**

<http://www.naleo.org/>

**Democracia U.S.A.**

<http://democraciausa.org/>

